A

SERMON

Preached at

St. Mary le Bow,

On Sunday, the 5th of *July*, 1691.

AT THE

Conſecration of the moſt Reverend Father in GOD,

JOHN, *Lord Archbiſhop of* York;

And the Right Reverend Fathers in GOD,

JOHN, *Lord Biſhop of* Norwich,

RICHARD, *L^d Biſhop of* Peterborough,

EDWARD, *Lord Biſhop of* Glouceſter.

By *JOSHUA CLARKE*, Chaplain to the Biſhop of *Norwich*.

LONDON:

Printed for William Rogers, at the *Sun* over-againſt St. *Dunſtan*'s-Church in *Fleet-ſtreet*. 1691.

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A Confecration SERMON, &c.

Heb. XIII. xvij.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your ſelves.

THE holy Apoſtle all along in this Epiſtle, as in moſt others, mixes with his Doctrine many Exhortations; and more eſpecially now that he is drawing towards a Concluſion. But not to ſpend time needleſly about the reſt of the Chapter, he gives them two Precepts with reſpect to their *Governors*; thoſe that had the Rule over them. The firſt is, To imitate their Faith, *Ver.* 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God, whoſe faith follow.* The ſecond is, To be ſubject to them, in the words I have read to you, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* And this laſt Ex-

Exhortation or Precept is backed with a very weighty Reaſon or Motive in the latter part of the Verſe, *for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

Here is no doubt to be made what ſort of Rulers the Apoſtle here means; for altho' the word ſignifie thoſe that in any ſenſe go before, lead or govern others; and therefore may be underſtood of any kind of Rulers, whether Civil, Military, or Eccleſiaſtical, and is uſed eſpecially for the two latter; yet it is plain, that in this place he reſtrains it to Eccleſiaſtical or Spiritual Rulers. For they are the Rulers that watch for their Souls, and ſuch as muſt be accountable for their Souls, that he here ſpeaks of.

I take it for granted, that the words concern us as well as thoſe they were immediately writ to: and that there is the ſame reaſon for the Chriſtians of this Age to obey their Spiritual Rulers, as there was for the Chriſtians of that. That the comfortable diſcharge of their Duties, and the good of their Peoples Souls require it now, as much as they did then. And this being premis'd, here are two things that the Text naturally leads us to. The

1*ſt* is, To conſider what kind of Spiritual Rulers are here ſpoken of, that is, with reſpect to the Diſputes among us, whither they were of the

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Episcopal, Presbyterian, or Independent Model. If of the Episcopal; whether it were a Protestant, or Popish Episcopacy I mean, whether all the Bishops were to look upon one another, as Brethren and Equals: Or that there was one that was Superior to all the rest, under whose sole Authority were all the then Bishops of the Christian World, and under the Authority of whose Successors, should the Successors of those Bishops be in all the after Ages of the Church.

2dly, What were the Measures of that Obedience and Subjection that the People were to pay them; or how far they were to be obey'd. And, when I first pitch'd upon these words, I intended to have discours'd on both these. But I shall not have leisure; the first will afford Matter enough for the time allow'd me, and is not, I hope, unsuitable to the occasion. Only, that I may speak with the greater regard to the present State and Circumstances of our Church, I shall take leave to alter the Terms of the Inquiry. And instead of shewing who were the Spiritual Rulers that the *Hebrews* were then to be subject to, or of what Form or Model they were; I shall endeavour to shew who are now the Peoples lawful Spiritual Guides, Pastors, or Rulers here in *England*, whom they must obey, or Whom they must be subject to. Or I shall shew who are now the right of Spiritual Rulers over us, that answer to those that

were over the *Hebrews* when the Apoſtle writ this Epiſtle. I confeſs 'tis a great Unhappineſs, that this ſhould be a Queſtion at this time of day. I do not know whither any thing be a greater Scandal to Religion, or more Deſtructive to the Souls of Men, if we take in all the Conſequences of the Diſpute, than this. And therefore I ſhall endeavour to clear Mens Doubts in this Matter, and in order to it, I lay down this Poſition.

That the reſpective Biſhops of the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſhed, with their reſpective Presbyteries, are the lawful Spiritual Rulers of all the People within the limits of their reſpective Dioceſſes; that whatever Power Chriſt has given to his Church is veſted in them; and that all the People of *England* are, by vertue of this Precept in the Text, to be ſubject to them. Now it is not to be expected, that I ſhould at this time ſay all that the Argument will bear: That is not to be done in a Sermon. Let it ſuffice, to bring good Proof of our own Authority, and anſwer the moſt plauſible Pleas of our Adverſaries againſt it.

In order to this, I obſerve that it is agreed between them and us, That no Man can lawfully take upon him the Office of a Spiritual Guide or Ruler, unleſs he have a lawful Call to it; and this is agreeable to Scripture. Thus St. *Paul* aſſerts his Office in theſe words: *Paul a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called to be an Apoſtle, ſeparated unto the Goſpel*

Rom. 1. v. 1.

Gospel of God. So that there is a Call, without which a Man is no lawful Ecclesiastical Governor: only it is a Question what this Call is. Some, I think, do take it to be an inward Call: by which, if they mean any thing, they must mean, a Man's being inwardly prompted by the Spirit of God to take this Office upon him. And I do not deny, but that this good Spirit may, and many times doth stir a pious Man up to it, in the same sense, that it stirs him up to other good Duties. And these good Motions may be Arguments to himself to enter into this Sacred Imployment. But we are now enquiring after such a Call as may satisfie others, that a person is a lawful Pastor: and that must not be an inward Call. For no Man can satisfie others, that he is inwardly called so fully, as that they may rely upon him as their lawful Pastor, without the outward Call: unless he prove his inward Call by Miracles: which I suppose they that alledge it do not pretend to.

There are other Conceits about this Call. Some Papists think it is solely from the Pope: whom they take to be Sole Bishop, and all other Bishops to be but his Curates. The *Erastians* think it is the Authority of the Civil Magistrate: and some think Abilities for the Work of the Ministry, with which they are apt to believe themselves wonderfully blest, are a Call sufficient, without any other Authority. To give a particular Refutation

tation of these several pretended Calls, I have not now time; nor is it necessary, the invalidity of them will appear, when I have shewn what the true Call is.

Wherefore, I say, a Person is then, and only then, lawfully called to any Office in the Church, when that Office is conferr'd upon him by those publick persons that have Authority in the Church to confer it. Now Christ being the Head of the Church, all Church Power must needs be originally in him, and in his Successors, as they derive from him. He committed his Authority to the Apostles, they to the Bishops and Presbyters their Successors; they to others, and so on to our days. And this Succession *Clement Romanus* (in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*) tells us, was from the beginning intended to be a Rule to the Church, to prevent Contention about these Matters. But we have no great dispute with any about the Orders of Presbyters or Deacons, viz. as ordain'd by Christ or his Apostles. The main Question is about the Order, Authority or Call of Bishops; and therefore my business is chiefly to argue for them, and for Presbyters and Deacons as ordain'd by them.

Wherefore, I say, if any disaffected to our Church shall ask a Presbyter or Deacon for his Authority, his answer is ready, I had it from my Diocesan, who ordain'd me, and admitted me to

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this particular Ministry; from whence had he authority so to do? from such as were his Predecessors in the same authority: and they from others, and so upwards, until we came to the Apostles; who received their authority from Christ, the Head of the Church, the Fountain of all Church Power. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*, said Christ to his Disciples; and as Christ sent them, so did they send their immediate Successors. They ordain'd Elders, that is Bishops, in every City, either by themselves, or by such as they gave authority to to this end *Timothy* was left at *Ephesus* by S. *Paul*, as is evident from the first and third Chapters of the first Epistle to him; And in the 1st of *Titus*, and the 5th Verse, he says expressly, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city*. And Church Government was not to expire with the Apostles immediate Successors: But was to continue so long as Christ should have a Church upon Earth. And therefore they were to do what they did, to ordain some to succeed them, as they succeeded the Apostles: and so on forwards to the end of Christ's Mediatory Office. And therefore who sees not, that they who in these distant ages do thus derive their authority mediately from our Spiritual Head, are as verily sent by him, as if he with his own mouth had bid them go

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If any ask us how we prove an uninterrupted Succession from the Apostles; we answer, it lies at their doors who dispute it, to prove the contrary. And yet for their satisfaction, we can tell em, that this Succession was always very carefully kept in all the Churches. None ever that we read of, in any Church, taking upon him the Office of a Bishop, and being own'd as such, without being Ordain'd by some other Bishops. In the Primitive times we find them so careful in this matter, that even Schismaticks themselves would use all the sly, and disingenuous arts imaginable to derive their Orders from Catholick Bishops. Thus we read the fam'd *Novatus* a Presbyter of *Rome*, who gave name to the *Novatian* Schism, despairing of being Ordain'd Bishop fairly, sent into a by-corner of *Italy* for three Bishops that knew nothing of the design, and by an imaginary and ineffectual imposition of Hands, forced from them, got himself made Bishop. This account *Eusebius* gives us of this matter, in the words of *Cornelius* the then Bishop of *Rome*. A plain proof, that either *Novatus* himself thought it necessary to be ordain'd by Bishops, and that he could have no authority without it; or that it was an opinion so rivetted in the minds of the Christians of that age by constant custom, that they would never have reputed him a Bishop without it. And for any thing that can be alledged to the contrary, this Succession

Ec. H. lib. 6. c. 43.

ceſſion has been carefully maintain'd in all the after ages of the Church: and ſo it was in this Church at the Reformation, notwithſtanding that idle ſtory of the *Nag's-head Tavern*; or any other Popiſh Calumnies to the contrary. For the Original of Archbiſhop *Parker's* Conſecration is undoubtedly ſtill preſerv'd, and may be ſeen amongſt our other authentick Records. So that we are very confident no Man can prove any interruption in this Succeſſion: and that we think is enough to ſatisfie any reaſonable Enquirer. For ſince the Biſhops are in poſſeſſion of their authority, the impugners of it, upon a pretence of a failure in their Succeſſion, ought in all reaſon firſt to prove it.

But I will go a little further, and offer at an argument which ſeems to prove it highly improbable, even next to impoſſible, that there ſhould be ſuch a failure. I argue from the number required to conſecrate a Biſhop. The firſt of the apoſtolick Canons require two or three Biſhops: But in all the Councils, whither General or Provincial, that meddle in this matter, three at the leaſt are requir'd, ſometimes more; but never, that I know of, under three. This I might prove, by repeating the Canons relating to the Conſecration of Biſhops; particularly *Canon* 21. of the firſt Council of *Arles*. *Can.* 4. of the firſt General Council. *Can.* 5. of the 2*d* Council of *Arles*. *Can.* 12. of the 2*d* Council of *Carthage*. But this

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would be a needleſs ſpending of time, ſince it is well known to every one, that is not an utter ſtranger to antiquity. Now how durſt any Man take upon him the Office of a Biſhop, without being conſecrated, who when he came to be queſtion'd, muſt prove he receiv'd his Orders by ſuch a number of Biſhops? And if any ſhould adventure on ſuch a wickedneſs, how improbable is it that he would get three Biſhops of the ſame Province to atteſt an untruth, in a matter of this importance? But let it be ſuppos'd, that now and then in an age there might be ſuch a thing done, and conſequently this Succeſſion in a Church be now and then interrupted, yet muſt it preſently cloſe again. Becauſe altho' the ancient Canons do, to prevent fraud in a matter of ſuch importance, and ſo to ſecure this Succeſſion, require at the leaſt three Biſhops to the conveying of Orders; yet it muſt be granted, that not above one is eſſentially neceſſary thereunto. So that he that hath been conſecrated but by one Biſhop, wants nothing that is eſſential to a Biſhop: Let it be ſuppos'd therefore, that one that never was ordain'd himſelf, ſhould take upon him to ordain others; that is, to convey an authority that he never receiv'd from Chriſt: yet foraſmuch as two others would be joyn'd with him, one of which, if not both, would without all doubt be a lawful Biſhop; the Orders of the perſon ſo conſecrated

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must needs be valid. And altho' his Church would during his life want a lawful Paſtor, yet would that want be made up in his ſucceſſor. Unleſs we ſhould ſuppoſe, that poſſible to be every day done in former times; the which we now find impoſſible to be once done, *viz.* that ſuch intruders ſhould continually creep into Churches undiſcovered, or unregarded. So that notwithſtanding ſuch ſingle interruptions in this Succeſſion, our Succeſſion is ſtill uninterrupted, and is ſufficient to convey to us our Orders mediately from Chriſt, the Fountain of all Church-Power. But after all, if any Man do think it in the leaſt probable, that at one time or other, in a courſe of ſo many ages, ſome of which were very ignorant, and very licentious, there has been a more general interruption: yet foraſmuch as we are no ways parties to it, know nothing of it, have all the reaſon in the World to believe it never was; I ſay, this being the caſe, we are humbly confident, that our one great Biſhop of Souls will never charge us with going before we were ſent: but will allow our Orders to all intents and purpoſes, as if there had never been any ſuch interruption.

Wherefore, I ſay, our anſwer to all that bid us prove our Call to the Miniſtry, is ready. We were ordain'd by our Dioceſans; they by others, predeceſſors to them in that authority; and ſo upwards, for any thing we know, or have any rea-

ſon to ſuſpect, until we aſcend to Chriſt, the Fountain of all Church-Power.

But ſay ſome of the Adverſaries of Epiſcopacy; Chriſt inſtituted a Parity of Miniſters in his Church; and appointed that Orders ſhould be adminiſtred by them; and that none ſhould take upon him an extraordinary authority over the reſt; nor an extraordinary power in conferring of Orders. This Inſtitution of our Lord's is alter'd, where-ever there is Epiſcopal Government, as it is in the Church of *England*: And this they take to be a material Objection againſt our Orders; and conſequently againſt our Call to the Miniſtry. But the vanity of all this will appear, if it be made manifeſt, That Epiſcopacy is of Apoſtolical Inſtitution; Or rather, That it was inſtituted either by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles: Or by the Churches in Apoſtolick times, agreeably to their minds. Now there is ſo much to be ſaid for this from Scripture, and the Practice and Records of the pureſt Antiquity, that we might wonder how it ever came to be doubted of, did we not know, how much the World is influenced by Paſſion and Intereſt.

I will not at this time undertake to ſay all that I might in the defence of Epiſcopacy. One Argument that concludes aright is ſufficient; and I have not leiſure for more. I wiſh all that want ſatisfaction in this matter, would impartially read the ancient Fathers and Councils; and eſpecially the

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genuine Epistles of *Ignatius*. This holy Bishop and Martyr lived in the first Century, was Bishop of *Antioch* about sixty five Years after our Savior's Passion; and seems in his Epistle to the Church of *Smyrna*, to say he saw him in the flesh after his Resurrection. And to convince us, that it was a genuine passage, we may read it cited out of the same Epistle by *Eusebius*. He writ six several Epistles to the six Churches of *Smyrna*, *Ephesus*, *Magnesia*, *Philadelphia*, the *Trallian*, and the *Roman* Church; all which have been prov'd to be genuine, beyond all contradiction, by the learned Bishop of *Chester*, and acknowledged to be so by *Videlius* a Presbyterian. And in every one of these (except in that to the Church of *Rome*, in which he says nothing either way) he speaks of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, as distinct Orders, or Degrees in the Church, and of the Superiority of Bishops above Presbyters. So that it is plain Episcopacy was in all these five Churches in those very early days of Christianity, even from his very words; and then it is observable, that he doth not only speak of this Government as in those Churches, but as if it were the common Form or Model; and therefore we have reason to think it was even in all other Churches. But I need not insist any longer upon the proof of this, since it is frequently own'd by the most learned of our adversaries, that it was setled in all

Ec. H. l. 3. c. 36.

all the Churches very near, yea in the days of the Apoſtles. And how could that poſſibly have been, if it had not been inſtituted either by Chriſt, or his Apoſtles; Or by the Churches in apoſtolick times, agreeably to their minds? How could it have been, if, what moſt of them contend for, any other Model had been left, and preſcrib'd the Church, either by our Lord, or his Diſciples? Certainly all the Churches did not agree ſo ſuddenly to alter the Inſtitution of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, and that without any the leaſt oppoſition or contradiction. *Videlius* tells us, that the difference between Biſhops and Presbyters crept into the Churches even in the Apoſtles days. We thank him for acknowledging the truth, *viz.* That Epiſcopacy was in the Church in the times of the Apoſtles: But why did he ſay it ſtole or crept into the Church? did he think ſo great a change came like a Thief, in the Night, through a Window, undiſcover'd, unperceiv'd, without the conſent, or againſt the minds of the Apoſtles?

But in truth the difference between Biſhops, Presbyters, and Deacons, in the moſt primitive times, hath been ſo plainly made appear by our Divines, that the learned amongſt our adverſaries do of late ſeem to own it; and therefore have thought good to change the ſtate of the Controverſie between them and us; affirming, that from the Apoſtles days, for ſeveral Centuries, and particularly

ticularly in St. *Cyprian's* time, if I miſtake not, who was Biſhop of *Carthage* in the middle of the third Century, Biſhops were only Paroſchial; that is, as they explain themſelves, their Dioceſſes were ſo ſmall, that the People committed to the charge of one Biſhop, might, and did, at ſome certain times, all together in one place hold communion with him and his Presbyters in all the Ordinances of Jeſus Chriſt.

We think this impoſſible, becauſe every City had but one Biſhop; As St. *Chryſoſtom* told *Siſinius* the Novatian, one City could not have two Biſhops; that is, as we are to underſtand it, * acting either diſtinctly, or in oppoſition to one another. And the Biſhop had committed to his charge all the Souls in that City, and within the diſtrict appertaining to it. Now in thoſe early ages of the Church we find the number of Converts was ſo great, that we believe all the Chriſtians, within the compaſs of a City, and its diſtrict, could never meet all together in one place. *Cornelius*, Biſhop of *Rome*, contemporary with St. *Cyprian*, tells *Fabius*, Biſhop of *Antioch*, in an Epiſtle, giving an account of *Novatus*, that there then were in the *Church of Rome* forty ſix Presbyters, ſeven Deacons, ſeven Sub-Deacons, forty two *Acoluthi*, fifty two other inferior Officers; fifteen hundred Widows and Poor, and an innumerable company of People; and can any Man think, that

* For ſome times a City had two Biſhops, but then they acted jointly, and had but one Flock; ſo that if our Adverſaries ſay true, it muſt have been but one Congregation ſtill.

Euſeb. Ec. H. lib. 6. c. 43.

that all theſe could ever meet together, in one place, to communicate with the Biſhop? Or that forty ſix Presbyters would have been neceſſary to aſſiſt the Biſhop, if his Flock had been ſo ſmall, as that they could all communicate together? Beſides, I obſerve, that the deſign of a Biſhop being placed in a City, was not only to govern the Chriſtians he there found within the City and its diſtrict, but likewiſe to convert all he could, and to govern all he could convert. And therefore upon the ground the Church then proceeded, when the whole Empire became Chriſtian, all the Souls within the Juriſdiction of each City muſt needs fall under the Government of its Biſhop; and they, I'm ſure, could never meet all together in one place of Worſhip. We do not find, that as Converts multiply'd, they likewiſe multiply'd their Biſhops, dividing the ſame City, and its Dependencies, into ſeveral Biſhopricks: but that the Biſhop, as he ſaw occaſion, multiply'd his Presbyters and Deacons.

Some do except againſt our Call to the Miniſtry, becauſe we are not elected by the People: And we grant, that in the primitive times the People did often chuſe their Paſtors; or rather, they conſented to their being ſet over them: For, to ſpeak it in the words of *Clemens Rom.* in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, it was done συνευδοκησασης της εκκλησιας πασης, the whole Church conſenting, or approving.

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But it doth not appear, that their choice or consent was ever understood to contribute any thing that was essential to a Man's Orders: but only laying on of the hands of those that had either Apostolical or Episcopal Power. Nor doth it seem to have been always stood upon, much less, had they it by any immutable Law; and therefore in after-times it was wholly taken away, to avoid the great Heart-burnings, Seditions, and sometimes Bloodshed that Popular Elections occasion'd. It seems to have been allow'd only as a matter of Expedience for the present state and circumstances of the Church: at the first, and when through Mens Passions and Interests it became an occasion of more hurt than good, it was time to take it away. And besides all this, I verily believe our Dioceses would not be ever a-whit the better provided for than they now are, if our Bishops were to be chosen by the People at some general Meetings; nor would those Elections be carried with more reputation either to the Church or Nation than they now are. And if the Peoples choice or consent be not necessary to the making of a Minister, much less is it true, that the *Cœtus fidelium* is the Subject of Church-Government, and that Ministers do derive their Authority from the People.

Some do except against us for making sinful Terms of Communion; a Charge often laid, but

never yet prov'd: nor can it be expected, that I should at this time descend into the particulars of it; let it suffice to have briefly answered what is objected against the Authority of our Bishops; and our Orders, as conferr'd by them.

But some may be apt to imagine, that in the Defence of our own Church and Orders, I proceed upon such Principles as condemn all the Protestant Churches beyond the Seas, and null their Orders. For if Episcopacy was instituted by Christ or his Apostles, or by the Churches in apostolick times, agreeably to their minds; and an uninterrupted Succession of Bishops hath been preserv'd in the Church even to our days: then what can be said for the Orders of such, as have separated from Bishops; and have been ordain'd both without and against them?

But certainly there is a great difference to be made betwixt those that separate from Bishops upon a just cause; and those that separate without it. Their Reformation was begun and carried on by Presbyters; Bishops would not reform; nor were there any Bishops, that I know of, at the beginning of the Reformation, that would Ordain any to succeed them without sinful Conditions. Their own, the Popish Bishops, would not, unless they would subscribe to Popery. Now Purity of Faith and Worship from Gross Error, Superstition, and Idolatry, concern-

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ed the Honour of God, and the Salvation of Men more nearly than any Mode of Government whatever, the former were not to be parted with, for any deference that was owing to the latter. So that the reforming Presbyters beyond the Seas, being urged by necessity, since Presbyters had, in the purest times, a right to joyn with the Bishop in Ordinations, did well to give what Authority they could to their Successors. And I doubt not but the goodness of God supply'd what was wanting for no other reason, but because the Popish Bishops would not give it without the sinful compliance of those that should receive it. Certainly this cannot be deny'd, since 'tis generally held, that his goodness supplies as great, or greater defects in particular, in the case of a Man's receiving Baptism, without any fault of his, from one that is not a lawful Minister. I think 'tis plain enough, that the Protestant Ministers beyond the Seas would not separate from Protestant Bishops. I am sure the most learned of them condemn our present Separation. Let any Man for his satisfaction read the Letters writ by three eminent foreign Divines, printed at the end of the most learned Bishop of *Worcester*'s Discourse of the Unreasonableness of Separation. To which let me add a Letter from Mr. *Deodate*, the Professor of Divinity, and Pastor of *Geneva*, sent to the Assem-

bly of Divines, Printed by the Special Command of King *Charles* the First; in which that peaceable Person expresseth such an esteem for our Church, and her Bishops, that I am very confident, had he been amongst us, he would never have separated from them. I hardly hear one of them, whom the late Persecution hath driven hither, that either decry our Orders, or refuse to be themselves Ordain'd by Bishops, altho' they had been before Ordain'd by Presbyters. Nay more, the most learned of their Divines are so far from condemning our Episcopacy, that they say it was necessity, that made their first Reformers set up Presbytery. And upon this occasion, I cannot but take notice of that Passage in one of the afore mention'd Letters; *viz.* Mr. *Claud's*, as considerable a person, as any the *French* Church has lately bred. *The same Divine Providence*, says he, *which by an Indispensable Necessity, and by the Conjuncture of Affairs, did, at the beginning of the Reformation, put our Churches under that of the Presbytery, hath put yours under that of the Episcopacy.* The Divine Providence (God be praised for it) has put ours under an Episcopacy: but it hath put theirs under a Presbytery, by an Indispensable Necessity. More might be said for their vindication, but that I have not leisure, nor is it my proper business at this time.

I now proceed to ſome of the moſt material Objections that thoſe of the Church of *Rome* make againſt us. I have not time to examine particularly all they object, either out of Scripture, or Antiquity; nor is it neceſſary that I ſhould; eſpecially now, that by the Iſſue their violent Councils have of late brought Affairs to; they ſeem reſolv'd to give over diſputing with us, and to decide all Controverſies between them and us, by other ſort of Weapons: Yet ſince I am upon this Argument, I will not decline what I take to be of the greateſt moment. And,

1. They alledge, That our Ordinations, tho' made by Biſhops, are Schiſmatical: ſince thoſe Biſhops have broke the Unity of the Church, by ſeparating from the Pope, the viſible Head of the Church, the Succeſſor of St. *Peter*, to whom Chriſt committed the Government of the whole Church, of which all ought to be Members, and by ordaining not only without, but againſt him.

But we deny their Notion of one viſible Head, and their Notion of one Church. We own, that in the Primitive times the Church of *Rome* and her Biſhops had a great reputation in the Chriſtian World. Becauſe both were eminent for Zeal, Conſtancy, and the Purity of their Faith,

Faith, and we wiſh they had continu'd ſo. But we deny, that ſhe in the firſt Age ever challenged a Superiority over other Churches; or her Biſhops over other Biſhops. St. *Paul* withſtood St. *Peter* to the face, and chid him ſeverely, *Gal.* 2. 11, 12 Verſes, and ſo on: And in the 7th, 8th and 9th Verſes of that Chapter, he equalizeth himſelf with *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, ſaying it was agreed between 'em, that *Peter*, *James*, and *John* were to be Apoſtles of the Circumciſion, he and *Barnabas* of the Uncircumciſion. St. *Peter* in all this, is far from claiming any ſuperiority over St. *Paul*. And in that famous Council held at *Jeruſalem*, *Acts* 15. it is manifeſt, St. *James*, and not St. *Peter*, altho' he were there, was Preſident; and that certainly, he would not have been, had they believ'd, that the viſible Head of the whole Church had been there. Ay, but Chriſt ſaid to *Peter*, *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church*, Matth. 16. 18. But they know many of the Ancients underſtand it of St. *Peter*'s Faith or Confeſſion; and therefore the reſt of the Apoſtles, who had the ſame Faith and afterwards made the ſame Confeſſion, were Rocks or Pillars of the Church, as well as St. *Peter*.

But what if it were the Rock that *Peter* had confeſſed, *viz.* Chriſt himſelf, that the Church was to be built upon? So St. *Auguſtin* interprets it.

124 *Tract. in Evang. Joh.*

it. And this I am ſure of, that when a Text will bear ſeveral ſenſes, we have no cauſe to pitch upon that which ſeems leaſt rational, and agrees neither with other Scriptures, nor with Antiquity. But ſuppoſe we ſhould grant, it meant of St. *Peter's* perſon: yet is not the Text a Rock, on which to build up his Oecumenical Paſtoral Power. Becauſe the Church of *Epheſus* is ſaid to be built upon the Prophets, and Apoſtles, and Jeſus Chriſt himſelf to be in ſubſtance, what they would from this Text attribute to St. *Peter*, *viz.* the chief Corner-ſtone, *Eph.* 2. 20. And *James* and *John* are called Pillars, a Name of like importance with Rock, as well as St. *Peter*, *Gal.* 2. 9. So that altho' we ſhould apply theſe words to St. *Peter's* perſon, they do not imply that he exercis'd any ſuperiority over the reſt of the Apoſtles. They only prove, that he ſhould be a great Apoſtle, a principal Stone in that Spiritual Building.

Ay, but Chriſt promiſed to give to St. *Peter* the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, with this Prerogative, *That whatſoever he bound on Earth, ſhould be bound in Heaven; and whatever he looſed on Earth, ſhould be looſed in Heaven*, v. 19. From theſe two Verſes *Bellarmine* infers the Pope's Power and Rule over the whole Church. That theſe laſt words reſpect his power of binding and looſing, we grant: But then it was not at that time

De Rom. Pon. l. 1.

time promiſed St. *Peter*, excluſively of the reſt, but only firſt promis'd to him; becauſe of the free Confeſſion of Faith that he then made, when all the reſt were ſilent: But we deny, that it imports any Power peculiar to him, more than was given to the reſt. For we read, *John* 20. 22, 23. That he breathed on eleven of the Apoſtles in St. *Thomas*'s abſence, and ſaid unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt; whoſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted; and whoſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.* In theſe words, 'tis plain the ſame Power is given to the other Apoſtles that was in the forecited Text given to St. *Peter*. And this is agreeable to what the ancient Fathers do teach, and particularly St. *Cyprian*, in the beginning of his Tract, *De Unitate Eccleſiæ*, only he addeth another reaſon why St. *Peter* alone was at that time ſpoken to, *viz.* Becauſe he would teach them Unity: But he affirms, that the reſt of the Apoſtles were, what St. *Peter* was, endow'd with equal ſhares both of Honour and Power. His words are very remarkable, and therefore I will cite them: *Ut unitatem manifeſtaret, unitatis ejuſdem originem ab uno incipientem, ſuâ autoritate diſpoſuit: hoc erant utique, & cæteri Apoſtoli, quod fuit Petrus, pari conſortio præditi, & honoris & poteſtatis; Sed exordium ab unitate proficiſcitur, ut eccleſia una monſtretur.* The late learned Biſhop of *Oxford*,

ford, in his Margin upon this place, quotes the words of *Photius* and *Optatus* to the same purpose.

And as the ancient Fathers deny St. *Peter's* having authority over other Apostles: so did they never dream of the Bishop of *Rome's* authority over other Bishops: whatever some of them thought of his being St. *Peter's* Successor, before Patriarchal Authority came into the Church; all Bishops thought themselves his Equals. And therefore we find, that in all the Epistles that St. *Cyprian*, Bishop of *Carthage*, writ to *Cornelius*, Bishop of *Rome*, and his Successor, *Stephen*, the Inscription is, *Cornelio fratri, & Stephano fratri.* And in his Epistles, he never once calls either of them more than Brother: and as he in some things asks their advice; so likewise, as their Brother and Equal, he gives them his, in many cases. Afterwards, when it was thought fit to introduce Patriarchal Authority into the Church, we own the Pope was allow'd to be the first Patriarch. Had all the Patriarchs met, he would have taken place of them all; not because they were within his Jurisdiction, or that he had any authority over them, but because he was Bishop of the Principal City.

At the first Bishops were placed in Cities, and not in Country-Towns: because in Cities

were the moſt Souls to convert; and thither the People repair'd for Commerce out of the Country; and as it is generally thought, that the Government of the Church might run paralel with that of the State. And when Patriarchal Juriſdiction came into the Church, they had their Places according to the Dignity of their Cities. And therefore we find, that, although *Byzantium*, being at the firſt a City of no great note, was therefore no Patriarchal City: yet afterwards, when *Conſtantine* had made it the Seat of the Empire, and therefore a principal City, calling it after his own Name, the ſecond General Council decreed not only, that the Biſhop thereof ſhould have the honour of a Patriarch, but that he ſhould take place next to the Patriarch of *Rome*, before the Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, although their Cities had then been of a long time Patriarchal. And the Canon gives this remarkable Reaſon: *Becauſe* Conſtantinople *was now become new* Rome. A plain intimation, that thoſe Fathers thought the reaſon why the firſt Place was given to the Biſhop of old *Rome*, was becauſe that City was then the Principal City, the Imperial City. And *Conſtantinople* now being much what its equal, and therefore having that which was the reaſon of giving precedency to the Biſhop of *Rome*, the Biſhop

Can. 3.

ſhop thereof had reaſon to challenge the next Place to him: We deny therefore, that the Biſhop of *Rome* had originally any authority over other Biſhops; and when afterwards he got authority over the Biſhops within his own Juriſdiction, it was but a Patriarchal authority, given him by the conſent of thoſe Biſhops, and confirm'd to him afterwards by the Canons, and was no more than the Patriarchs of *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, and afterwards of *Conſtantinople*, had over the Biſhops within their reſpective Juriſdictions. So far was he from being the viſible Head of the whole Church: and what Authority of that nature he is now poſſeſſed of, he hath got by uſurping gradually upon Princes and Biſhops.

2. But ſay the moſt moderate of the Party, You cannot deny, but that the Biſhop of *Rome* was ever looked upon as the Weſtern Patriarch: and therefore your Biſhops muſt needs be Schiſmatical, for rejecting his Patriarchal Authority; for denying him the Obedience due to a Patriarch. And we grant, that the Biſhop of *Rome* was anciently, ever ſince that Government came into the Church, and is ſtill to be own'd, when ever he will hear reaſon, as the Weſtern Patriarch: But we deny, that all the Churches of the Weſt were anciently under his

Juriſdiction. It is a great miſtake to think, that all the Chriſtian Churches were anciently under the Juriſdiction of the four Patriarchs; many Provinces were governed by their own Metropolitans, who own'd no Subjection to any of them.

The firſt General Council found three Biſhops, *Rome*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, had gotten Patriarchal authority over ſeveral Provinces under each Patriarch reſpectively: but that many Archbiſhops governed their Provinces independently, without ſubjecting them to any of the Patriarchs. And it confirm'd the ancient Cuſtom, *viz.* That the Patriarchs ſhould ſtill enjoy their Power, and the Metropolitans their Priviledges. And therefore we find in the third General Council, that of *Epheſus*, the Patriarch of *Antioch*, having attempted to bring the Province of *Cyprus* under his Juriſdiction, the *Cyprian* Biſhops complain to the Council, alledging, That they were not ſubject to that Patriarch by ancient Cuſtom, and that therefore by the Canons of the Council of *Nice*, they ought to be ſtill exempted, and ſtill to retain the Right of Conſecrating their own Metropolitan amongſt themſelves, for about that particular Right was the Controverſie. The Council, upon hearing the Matter, determined, That the Province

ſhould

ſhould ſtill remain under its own Biſhops, exempt from the Juriſdiction of the Patriarch of *Antioch*; that they ſhould Ordain their own Metropolitan; and that hereafter no Biſhop ſhould uſurp Authority over any Province, that had not anciently been under his, or his Predeceſſor's Juriſdiction; and that if ſuch Uſurpation ſhould ever be, it ſhould be laid down again, leſt the Decrees of the Fathers ſhould be broken, and Worldly Ambition ſhould creep in, under the pretence of Sacerdotal Power. Now 'tis manifeſt, that a long time after this Decree was paſs'd, and much longer after the Council of *Nice*, the Limits of the *Roman* Patriarchate reached not near to *Britain*. *Auguſtine* the Monk, was ſent amongſt the *Saxons* by the Pope, about the latter end of the ſixth, or the beginning of the ſeventh Century; and the *Britiſh* Biſhops then knew nothing of his authority, nor would they ſubmit to *Auguſtine*. And what authority he got in *England* after that time was by uſurpation; and therefore by the Decree of the Council of *Epheſus*, he ought to lay it down; and ſince he will not, our Biſhops do well to reject it, and are not Schiſmatical in ſo doing.

But beſides all this, I obſerve, that when Limits were anciently ſet to the Juriſdictions of the four Patriarchs, they were all Subjects to the Empire;

pire; and might therefore exerciſe their Spiritual Power, without any hazard to the Right thereof: but that cannot be done where the Patriarch is a Subject to one Prince, and hath part of his Juriſdiction within the Territories of another; much leſs where the Patriarch is a Temporal Monarch. And this ſeems to me a very great Objection againſt the extending the Pope's Spiritual Power at this day, any further than his Temporal Dominions are extended; and conſequently againſt his having any thing to do in *England*. And if he have no Authority here, then our Biſhops and their Clergy are not only freed from the Charge of Schiſm, for rejecting his groundleſs Claim, but that Charge returns upon him, and his Party here; ſuch as have their Orders from him in oppoſition to our Biſhops, are no Clergy for us; and therefore both they, and thoſe that own them for their Paſtors, are Schiſmaticks.

They do alſo make ſome other frivolous Objections againſt us, that I have not time to anſwer now. Let it ſuffice to have ſaid thus much in a ſingle Sermon againſt the moſt material Exceptions of our Adverſaries on either hand. I have endeavoured to avoid being tedious, as much as I could, and that has made me ſometimes paſs over things too briefly; and not to ſpeak ſo diſtinctly

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as I would have done: but yet, I hope, I have ſaid enough to ſatisfie reaſonable People of the Validity of our Orders, and that my Poſition ought to be granted, *viz.*

That the reſpective Biſhops of the Church of *England*, as by Law eſtabliſhed, with their reſpective Presbyteries, are the lawful Spiritual Rulers within the Limits of their reſpective Dioceſſes; that whatever Power Chriſt has given to his Church is veſted in them; and that all the People of *England* ought to be ſubject to them.

And now it would have been very pertinent, both to the Words I have read to you, and to the Occaſion, to have laid down the Meaſures of that Obedience which is owing to the Rulers of the Church. But the time is gone, and therefore I will not enter upon it, only I beg leave to make an Inference or two from what hath been ſaid. And,

1. If the Biſhops with their reſpective Presbyteries, be the lawful Eccleſiaſtical Rulers of all the People of *England*; then is the Church of *England*, as ſetled under them, the true Church of God in theſe Kingdoms: And if ſo, then it highly concerns all thoſe that have hitherto ſeparated from her, to flock into her Communion. I have had no occaſion at this time to ſay any thing of the

the groſs Corruptions both in Faith and Worſhip that the Church of *Rome* is guilty of. But ſetting both aſide, I think it very plain, from what has been ſaid, that, after all her repeated confident Claims of being the only Catholick Church, out of which there is no Salvation, ſuch of her Members as live in theſe Kingdoms are Schiſmaticks. And that by having in every City, a Church, a Biſhop, and a Clergy, in oppoſition to ours, the true Churches, Biſhops, and Clergy, they are guilty of the ſame ſin that the ancient Fathers charge upon the Schiſmaticks of their times; the ſame ſin that the *Samaritans* were guilty of, in ſetting up a Temple, a Prieſthood, and an Altar at Mount *Gerezim*, in oppoſition to the true Temple, Prieſthood and Altar at *Jeruſalem*. And altho' I am far from affirming a Nullity in their Baptiſm, as St. *Cyprian* doth of ſuch as in his days broke the Unity of the Church: yet I think they are guilty of ſuch groſs Errors and Corruptions, as do fully juſtifie our Separation from them.

And altho' I am very loth to ſay any thing ſevere againſt our Proteſtant Diſſenters, yet I cannot but deſire them ſeriouſly to conſider, how far their Separation can be excuſed upon their own Principles. We are indeed content, that it be left as a Method peculiar to the Church of *Rome*, to beat Men into her Communion. We

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envy her not the glory of that over-warm Charity, that consumes Mens Bodies to save their Souls. Our Reverend Prelates have willingly come to a temper with Dissenters, by joining with the Magistrate in easing them of violent Prosecutions; but yet notwithstanding, they may be still obliged in point of Conscience to live in Subjection to our Bishops, and to hold Communion with our Church. And therefore, out of zeal to their welfare, I heartily wish they would lay aside all unreasonable Prejudices, that they would impartially consider the things that belong unto their own, and the Churches Peace, and dispose themselves towards a Reconciliation. And then it will become the Wisdom and Charity of our Church-Governors to think of all such Ways of making it easie to them, as may not prejudice their own just and necessary Authority, nor drive as many out of the Communion of the Church, as it draws into it.

2. From what I have said, it follows, That the Honour and Authority of this Church, and her Governors, ought to be maintain'd, and their Rights secur'd. The People ought to obey them that have the Rule over them, and submit themselves; to live up to the Precepts of good Life that they give; that so they prove not a Scandal

to that Church, of which they profeſs themſelves Members; to frequent the Prayers and Sacraments; attentively to hear the Word, and do it; and, as becomes obedient Children, to ſubmit without wrangling to ſuch innocent Injunctions as are for Order and Decency. Likewiſe the Civil Powers ought to maintain this Church, and the juſt Rights and Authority of our Eccleſiaſtical Rulers; and while they ſhew pity to Diſſenters, great care is to be had, that they be not ſuffered to grow upon, or run down the Church. And they that hold any Eccleſiaſtical Office, muſt behave themſelves as Rulers of the Houſhold of God, otherwiſe they act very unbecoming their Places, and are, after all their noiſie Zeal for the Church of *England*, the very worſt Enemies that ſhe hath.

But the Perſons I now ſpeak of, do already know their Duties, and how much it concerns them to do them, much better than I can teach them: For certainly I need not tell my Reverend Brethren, the Presbyters of this Church, how much her Reputation depends upon the diligent Diſcharge of their Duties, and the Innocency of their Lives. Much leſs ſhall I preſume to give Rules to the great Lights of our Church, the Reverend Prelates, whoſe Wiſdom and Learning will ſufficiently inſtruct them in their Duties, and leave them without excuſe at that Day, when they muſt give up

up their Accounts to the one great Biſhop of Souls, if they do not faithfully diſcharge them.

To conclude, Since we have no cauſe to queſtion the Authority of our Spiritual Rulers, let us beg of God, That they may uſe it to his glory, and the Churches good. Let us not ceaſe to offer up moſt fervent Prayers to him, for all thoſe that are called to any Office or Miniſtry in the Church; and particularly for theſe Reverend Perſons now about to enter into this Sacred Order. That God would inſpire them with a double meaſure of his Spirit and Grace, that ſo they may be bright Examples of Piety and Vertue to their Flocks. That they may be Men hating Covetouſneſs, not ſeeking their own Profit: but the Profit of many, that they may be ſaved. That God would give them Wiſdom, to direct them in all their Actions; and ſuch Courage, as that in the Cauſe of God and Religion, they may not fear the Faces of Men. That by their Sound Doctrine, and Exemplary Lives, they may help to awaken a ſtupid ſenſual World, and raiſe up in the Minds of the People, the Fear of God, and the lively Spirit of Primitive Chriſtianity.

Likewiſe, That God would diſpoſe their Flocks to reverence them as their lawful Paſtors; to obey them in the Lord; to imitate their Lives, and

live up to their Instruction: that so God may be glorifi'd; the Salvation of Souls, for which his Son shed his most precious Blood, promoted; the Mouth of all Gain-sayers stopped; and his Church still continue to be, and be every day more and more the Glory and Bulwark of the Reformation.

And grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, That the Course of this World may be so peaceably ordered by thy Governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom, with thee, O Father, and ever blessed Spirit, be ascribed, as is most due, Adoration and Praise, henceforth and for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.